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REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STOCKHOLM ACTION PLAN: ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVITIES IN THE ECA REGION, 1971-1981

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. Pursuant to Conference of Ministers resolution 408 (XVI) of 10 April 1981 on human settlements which, inter alia, spelt out the terms of reference of the Joint Inter-governmental Regional Committee on Human Settlements and Environment, and particularly paragraph 3 (c) thereof which requested a periodic review of the work programme and priorities on the environment in the Commission and appraisal of progress made in their implementation, and also taking cognizance of the fact that the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) is at the moment carrying out an evaluation of its activities, during the ten years after Stockholm, the Environment Co-ordination Office decided to inform the Joint Inter-governmental Regional Committee on Human Settlements and Environment of the Commission's activities during the said period. Consequently, what follows is an attempt to present the background to the problem, review and evaluate ECA activities between 1972 and 1981 and draw some related conclusions.

II. BACKGROUND

A. The Economic Commission for Africa and the 1972 Stockholm Conference

2. The Industrial Revolution of the mid-nineteenth century sparked off a rapid rate of industrial production matched by an equally rapid rate of distribution and related adjusted consumption in a greater geographical space. As a result, a chain reaction was also initiated in the other production processes that depended on the motive force provided by the Revolution. The main changes were in mining and agriculture, where scientific research was encouraged purposely to enhance and promote the gains of the Revolution. This meant a change in the patterns of the distribution and consumption of goods as well as on the patterns of development and life-styles. Larger geographical areas could now be put under cultivation because of new agricultural machines; there were also changes in the atmospheric conditions that were caused by industrial emissions into the air; and other interferences that gave a new aesthetic perception, besides the varied types of pollution to the physical environment.

3. The increased rate of production meant greater demand for, and management of, physical and human resources both in the raw material-producing countries and in the industrializing regions of the world - greater demand for cotton, timber, rubber, cocoa, tea and coffee. Virgin tropical forest areas were now being opened up for large tropical plantation for agriculturally based raw materials. In the course of doing this, forest areas were gradually being reduced, generally without rejuvenation, at the same time degenerating soil quality with the consequent spill-off effects. In the industrializing countries greater contamination of water, air, agricultural land and the general ecosystem

by industrial waste (emissions and effluents) also resulted. The Industrial Revolution therefore, implicitly, sparked off a revolution in environmental management as new sources and dimensions of environmental degradation surfaced.

4. To cope with the ensuing environmental problems, some measures for managing the negative effects of the Revolution were initiated. In the industrialized countries this was done through the improvement of public health and other public utility services whereas in the raw material-producing regions, principally the tropical world, the short- and long-term effects were taken as "compensation" for the riches derived from the export of raw materials and the degradation of the environment was taken as a matter of course.

5. Accelerated environmental degradation from the Industrial Revolution was further complicated and made more embarrassingly complex by the after-effects of the two World Wars which could only have been as devastating as they were as a result of the technological advances that made man a danger to himself after the Industrial Revolution. A new level of environmental concern had now been introduced, that of the disasters of wars, with all their ramifications.

6. After the Second World War, international concern for the salubrity of the environment, though belatedly, became a priority area of activity for the concert of nations and the United Nations. This concern was made more concrete by the content of General Assembly resolutions 2398 (XXIII) of 3 December 1968 deciding to convene a global conference on the "Human Environment" in Stockholm in 1972, and 2581 (XXIV) of 15 December 1969, establishing a Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment. The Secretary-General of the United Nations in his opening statement to the first session of the Preparatory Committee for the Conference stated the gravity of the situation:

> "the realization of a new and very disturbing aspect of the spreading and growing industrial civilization has now arisen: man has suddenly awakened to the dimensions, to the rapidity and to the mass effects of productive processes on the physical endowment and configuration of this planet and on its basic biological balances. To produce at any cost, without due consideration to effects on the environment, can no longer be the central pre-occupation of man. Control of the effects of productive processes will require new economic thinking, new legal instruments, new administrative measures and new government priorities". 1/

7. Since its establishment in 1958, the Economic Commission for Africa

> "has sought to provide a base of analyses and research into African problems, assist information flows among countries, advice its constituents, and initiate and participate in co-ordinated policies and actions for African economic and social development.

1/ A/CONF.48/PC/6, Report to the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment (1970), page 43.

"In the 1960s ECA became an exclusively African organization as the number of African member States increased and the original non-African members withdrew as their territorial responsibilities waned. Common interests also crystallized in the creation of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in 1963, which gave impetus to decolonization, worked for African political unity, and provided a political compliment to ECA's efforts in the economic and social field". 2/

8. Drawn from these years of field experience is the conclusion that the time is now ripe for a drastic change from the ironical situation in which Africa has been squeezed by the debilitating exploits of the industrializing countries into mendicity for sometimes un-needed technical assistance; a change from the situation in which these African countries have overlooked their own immense resource potential and have tended to sit waiting for development that will never come; a change to the new situation where Africa will not wait to export its vast raw material resources in order to import them in a processed form as manufactured goods; a change to a long overdue era during which Africa should be able to extract its raw materials, process them in its own industries, for its own consumption and export only surpluses of raw materials and processed goods to overseas markets when trans-country demands, within the region, have been satisfied. The underlying philosophy is that the management and conservation of the environment, both its human and its physical aspects, can be effective only when Africa is in control of its resource development and pattern of life-styles, and this, for Africa, will be the only acceptable definition of self-reliant and self-sustaining social and economic development.

9. It is in the spirit of this momentum of environmental awareness and in keeping with the Economic and Social Council resolution 1536 (XLIX) of 27 July 1970, reaffirming the action-oriented character of the (Stockholm) Conference and that due account should be taken of such environmental problems as are particularly acute in developing countries, that ECA tackled the problems of environmental management in Africa. It was also as a result of this and in keeping with the ECA Conference of Ministers resolution 224 (X) of February 1971, that a regional seminar on Human Environment for Africa was held in Addis Ababa, from 23 to 28 August 1971 as one of the preparatory activities for the Stockholm Conference.

10. The Addis Ababa seminar proposed action, not just for the preparation of the Stockholm Conference but also for developing national and regional capabilities effectively to sensitize the population and Governments to the environment issue. 3/ The areas of immediate concern covered were:

(a) Human Settlements - Urbanization, sanitation, environmental quality and rural development;

2/ JIU/REP/82/1: Report on the Economic Commission for Africa

3/ E/CN.14/532: Report of the first All-African Seminar on the Human Environment (Addis Ababa, 1971).

(b) Conservation of natural resources - Natural resource inventories in Africa, insufficiency of means, techniques and specialist personnel;

(c) Development and industrialization - Objectives and strategies for Africa's development in the 1970s and the adoption of the Declaration of the Programme of Action on Industrial Development in Africa during the 1970s by ECA/OAU Conference of Ministers of Industry; and

(d) Manpower and environment - Adequate supply of technical and scientific skills for environmental management and periodic evaluation of such needs.

The Commission had thus prepared the ground for Africa to initiate action in handling environmental issues and to participate fully at the Conference on the Human Environment.

B. The Economic Commission for Africa within the Stockholm Action Plan

11. The United Nations Conference on the Human Environment was held in Stockholm from 5 to 16 June 1972 and came out with a declaration containing a set of principles seeking to ensure a high level of environmental management for the control of environmental degradation. 4/

12. There was also an Action Plan for managing the human environment, the framework of which included an interplay of activities in (a) environmental assessment; (b) environmental management; and (c) supporting measures. Within this framework, recommendations were made for action at the international level and co-ordinating responsibilities for the implementation of this Plan were given to the relevant organs of the United Nations system that were directly concerned. These recommendations covered the responsibility for assisting in the:

(a) Planning and management of human settlements for environmental quality;

(b) Co-ordination of environmental aspects of natural resource management;

(c) Identification and control of pollutants of broad international significance;

(d) Dissemination of environmental education, information, social and cultural aspects of environmental issues; and

(e) Promotion of development within the framework of environmental considerations.

In these recommendations, there was specific reference for "specialized environment centres" to be established in the developing countries, and the

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4/ A/CONF.48/14/Rev.1 : Report of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, Stockholm, 1972.

regional commissions, by General Assembly resolution 2997 (XXVII) of 15 December 1972, were invited together "with other appropriate regional bodies, to intensify further their efforts directed towards contributing to the implementation of the environment programmes in view of the particular need for the rapid development of regional co-operation". Because of their regional character, the regional commissions were therefore being requested to play the lead role in co-ordinating environmental activities within their respective regions.

13. Equally, by resolution 2997 (XXVII), the General Assembly made concrete proposals for the creation of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and its Governing Council. The UNEP Governing Council endorsed the provisions of General Assembly resolution 2997 (XXVII) which, in matters of planning and implementation of programmes, invited "the components of the United Nations system to supply the Executive Director ... with information on their current planning activities in the field of the environment, ... to avoid duplication ..." . ECA was, therefore, faced with the task of bringing the principles of the Stockholm Declaration and the implications of UNEP Governing Council decision into operation.

C. The African environment and the philosophy for implementing the Stockholm Action Plan

14. As in the case of most regions that were the suppliers of raw materials for the industrial countries, the environmental problems that beset Africa were, and still are, a direct legacy of the Industrial Revolution and the ensuing scramble for Africa with the resultant carving out of spheres of influence. Advantage was taken, by the industrializing countries, of the diverse African cultural settings, the vastness of the continent itself and the complications of the multiple varieties of colonial experiences to foster the unscrupulous exploitation of the wide spectrum of African natural resources, both renewable and non-renewable. This is obvious from the fact that the notions of environmental management were neglected, even as late as the 1960s. This was definitely a manifestation of the continued greed for raw material exploitation and the unscrupulous reaping where the industrializing countries did not sow or replenish the renewable resources, both in domesticated and wild-life ecosystems: the exploitation of timber without re-afforestation practices (even where rules and regulations existed for the purpose, they were blatantly flouted); inducing tropical countries, particularly those of Africa, to lay all emphasis on an agricultural export economy to the neglect of food production for local consumption, thereby sowing the seeds of the present serious environmental impacts of famine and malnutrition; and the deliberate policy of the industrializing countries not to establish local industries in areas producing raw materials but rather to encourage the exportation of raw materials that can be easily processed locally and the importation of the same materials in a processed form. In this way they encouraged the introduction of alien patterns of consumption, values and life-styles, with their impact on the physical as well as the human environment. As if this was not enough, the industrializing countries reacted to the implications of the self-determination principles of the period that came with the wind of change in Africa by moving from the single company monopoly to

that of the multinational consortium operating under different names and sometimes dealing in the same raw materials for their industrial concerns, and making sure that the advantages of yester-year were not altered.

15. The environmental fall-out in the raw material producing countries of this type of economic exploitation was ascribed to the purported inherent ignorance, poverty or laziness of the African peoples from which they themselves were incapable of emerging. On the pretext of alleviating the situation, a new "scramble" for Africa was launched through massive, often competitive, wasteful and dismally mismanaged technical assistance in terms of project financing and manpower expertise, mainly in the industrial and distribution sectors such that the hold on the economic life of any nation would be perpetually ensured.

16. The result, as would be expected, was that even those African countries that were natural resource giants were often thrown into social, economic and political turmoil triggered by the self-doubt syndrome through which a de facto situation was imposed on them whereby they thought that the panacea to their resource development and management ills could come only from overseas. Consequently, the concept of resource development, management and conservation hardly changed and the dimensions of the environmental impact of both physical and human resource development was seldom considered.

17. The delay in realizing the environmental dangers of unscrupulous natural resource exploitation was due to several reasons, the main one being that the volume of natural resources appeared to the producing countries to be inexhaustible. The seemingly vast and inexhaustible expanses of evergreen forest, equally vast areas of unoccupied cultivable land, immense seas, ocean and lakes with untold marine resources, vast pasture lands and inestimable wildlife resources, all these and more, the African was made to think, could never be exhausted. Consequently, there was an intensive process of exploitation without thought of planned replenishment or substitution. There was no need, it was thought, for clear and defined replacement policy; there was enough to spare, and the factors of growth, in all their forms and interpretations, and in all sectors were never taken into account. In the case of timber exports for instance, few realized that the indiscriminate exploitation of forest resources engendered intensive soil erosion and its subsequent degradation. This reduces not only the cultivable areas, but also the quantity of what is being produced. At the same time, the high rate of population growth in turn means the diminishing agriculturally productive areas have now to support a larger population than before. Adaptable technology for intensive agricultural production or the utilization of mined-out areas and erosion control have never been introduced as an integral part of mineral development programmes; instead, the literature disseminated often criticized the inevitable rudimentary nature of African production systems but the introduction of adaptable techniques and technologies to invigorate the system was never seriously thought of. At the same time changes in world market commodity prices and in life-styles in the industrializing areas led to research into substitute sources of raw materials resulting in the development of materials like synthetics and other products for a whole range

of marketable products; this is threatening the natural raw material resource base of Africa. Consequently, there has been a related fall in the prices of rubber, cocoa, coffee, as well as a concomitant regression in the economies of the countries that relied on single commodity trade without developing home industries for their raw materials or local tastes and life-styles for consuming locally produced goods.

18. On the investment side, the income derived from commodity exports is seldom invested in activities that will replenish the natural resources base but rather in projects and programmes that are out of proportion to the income derived or will require more maintenance investment than stimulate income growth. This leads to the obvious situation where capital is constantly being consumed and supplementary funds have always to be sought from bilateral and other sources, thereby perpetuating the state of economic dependence that has plagued Africa until now. Business concerns from the industrializing countries have exploited this situation of self-doubt and dependence by holding back the introduction of adaptable technologies and thereby increasing their profits, so that Africa has been developing the industrialized countries as well as helping to solve their environmental problems. The situation whereby environmental impact assessment and management should have been an integral part of resource exploration, exploitation and processing, has hardly ever been taken account of seriously and no environmental management machineries have been set up or equipped with the related legislative instruments and with adequate administrative support to ensure that both African and non-African consortia engaged in natural resource development should take heed of the environmental impacts of exploration, exploitation and processing activities.

19. The most debilitating effect has been that, whereas African countries have further assisted the advancement of the industrialized countries by taking on their tastes and life-styles and have become aliens even in their own countries through their exotic tastes and life-style preferences, it has often been considered by some Africans more civilized and "developed" to acquire, possess and/or consume a product made overseas although they can acquire or produce the same product cheaply locally.

20. The consequence has been that pressing environmental issues which were given importance overseas, decades back, in Africa have been considered, in most cases, as secondary matters. Fortunately the situation is changing as there is increasing awareness for issues such as: 5/

(a) The environmental impacts of resource depletion like deforestation and resultant soil degradation with all its implications on food production (famine, malnutrition); deforestation and the risk of desertification even in the regions that are now considered as evergreen equatorial forests; fuelwood and energy resources;

5/ E/CN.14/698/Add.1, Report of the Seminar on Alternative Patterns of Development and Life-Styles for the African Region, 12 March 1979.

(b) Pollution from industrial and other development activities including toxic materials, solid waste, water pollution and air pollution; and

(c) Health consideration of development activities such as water resource development and water-borne diseases.

All these areas of environmental monitoring and management are beginning to create concern within Africa and positive action is being initiated as reflected in the recommendations and strategies of the Lagos Plan of Action. It is within this context that a review will be made of ECA's environmental activities for the period between the Stockholm Plan of Action on the Human Environment to the Lagos Plan of Action for the economic development of Africa.

III. ECA'S ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVITIES BETWEEN THE ADOPTION OF THE STOCKHOLM PLAN AND THE LAGOS PLAN OF ACTION

21. After the 1972 Stockholm Conference and in accordance with General Assembly resolution 2997 (XXVII), ECA was specifically requested by the Conference of Ministers at its second meeting through its resolution 238 (XI) "to work out the appropriate method to be used in the evaluation on intra- as well as extra-African factors affecting the progress made during the Second United Nations Development Decade"; and decided that Africa's Strategy for Development in the 1970s should be complemented by environmental problems which call for urgent attention:

"(i) Inadequate water supplies for man, animal and crops;

(ii) The destruction of forests and grass cover leading to soil degradation and causing marginal areas to turn into desert land;

(iii) The prevalence of water-borne and other endemic diseases;

(iv) The importation of polluting industries into Africa;

(v) The concentration of human populations in agglomerations arising as a result of the establishment of mining and/or industrial complexes".

22. Within this context a set of objectives were recommended for the strategies that would seek to improve and protect the environment:

(i) Improvement in the management and utilization of plant and animal resources in the game reserves so as to earn enough foreign exchange and, at the same time, to protect this unique heritage for posterity;

(ii) Where such areas are contiguous to a number of countries, promotion of multinational co-operation in the fields of legislation, conservation, exchange of information, research projects, fishery regulations, etc.;

(iii) Improvement of the rural environment ... ;

(iv) Finding solutions for:

- Over-crowding in cities ... ;

- proliferating industrial and/or mining complexes which create serious environmental problems in a number of countries;
- exportation of pollutive industries as a result of environmental consideration;
- major threats to African exports that may arise, 6/

23. The problem of drought was also given special attention because it was considered to be of major concern not only to desert zones but also to those in the forest zones of Africa. In addition Conference of Ministers resolution 239 (XI) recommended "that the Governments concerned declare the drought zone a disaster area" and requested "the Executive Secretary to make the necessary approaches to competent organizations so that all measures ... calculated to keep the consequences of this peril within bounds will be taken".

24. For the purpose of applying the aforegoing legislative texts, environment was given a more obvious place in the ECA programme of work and priorities for 1974-1976, particularly through the identification of major environmental problems in Africa and research into solutions thereto. Meantime the period 1972-1973 was spent on the collection of data aimed at producing a periodic report on the African environment in keeping with the recommendations of Addis Ababa Seminar (1971) and as one of the activities in preparation for the Stockholm Conference and the Action Plan that was adopted at that Conference.

25. As a follow up to General Assembly resolution 2997 (XXVII) and UNEP Governing Council decision 1 (I), ECA actively encouraged the initiation of inter-agency co-operation for promoting inter-governmental collaboration in environmental matters, and formalized this relationship with an agreement on joint project implementation. An agreement was also reached on the formation of an Inter-governmental Advisory Group for the African Environment which would advise the Executive Secretary of ECA and the Executive Director of UNEP on programme proposals concerning the African region.

26. The ECA secretariat also made a project proposal to the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) for the establishment of a regional remote sensing satellite ground receiving and data handling centre in Africa with an in-built training component. These moves were sanctioned by Conference of Ministers resolution 280 (XII) of February 1975. ECA also contributed to a paper for the Kenyan Government in respect of a USAID/Kenyan Government seminar on the use of remote sensing for natural resource survey. Other papers were prepared on the urban environment in Africa in connexion with the International Congress of Africanists and the East African seminar on the environment as well as for the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements in Vancouver, 1976.

6/ E/5253, Economic and Social Council Official Records, fifty-fifth session, supplement No. 3, p. 84.

27. At the third meeting of the ECA Conference of Ministers in February 1975, further directives were given to the Commission by resolutions 264 (XII) requesting the Executive Secretary to seek means of organizing meetings on the problem of desertification, and 265 (XII) which dealt with the encouragement of solar energy research.

28. Inter-agency collaboration with UNEP was further strengthened through UNEP Project FP/0305-75-13 relating to the evaluation and assessment of and advice on environmental machineries in selected African countries. The aim of the project was to:

(a) Evaluate and assess the working of established environmental machineries and their efficiency in responding to problems of the countries concerned;

(b) Provide advisory services where required;

(c) Identify country officials who will participate in the project seminar/workshop on the environment;

(d) Identify officials to undertake study tours in some of the countries visited.

As part of the preliminary activities of the project, a member of the secretariat visited a number of North African countries.

29. During the same period and at the invitation of the Government of Swaziland, the secretariat assisted in organizing the Swaziland National Seminar on the Human Environment scheduled for May 1976, and in drawing up legal instruments for the establishment of a national machinery for the human environment.

30. The secretariat also participated, during 1975, in a series of activities that helped to enhance its co-ordination of environmental activities in the region as well as to promote inter-agency co-operation, most important among which were:

(a) The formulation of proposals for a Regional Remote Sensing Satellite Ground Receiving and Data Processing Station with the collaboration of the Governments of the region and agencies of the United Nations system;

(b) The Barcelona Conference on pollution in the Mediterranean region and the ensuing convention for the protection of that subregion from pollution;

(c) The Rome meeting on the problems of arid and semi-arid zones from which an agreement was reached to create an international body to implement related projects under the auspices of FAO; and

(d) The Teheran meeting on the problems of desertification and arid lands.

Furthermore, by resolution 308 (XIII) of March 1977, the ECA Conference of Ministers endorsed action in respect of the problems of water resources development in Africa within the Mar del Plata Action Plan not only in terms of potable water resources but also in the management of the environmental fall-outs of water projects.

31. The very close collaboration between ECA and UNEP, particularly at the regional level was greatly promoted by UNEP's action in entrusting to ECA the execution of project FP/0302-75-13 (Evaluation and assessment of/and advice on national environmental machineries in selected African countries). Within this context a Regional Seminar on the Human Environment was held for 30 participants from African countries to exchange ideas and experiences and make recommendations for national environmental management in Africa. Also, ECA collaborated with UNEP in the preparation for the African Regional Conference on Desertification (1976) which examined the draft Plan of Action for combating desertification for submission to the global Conference on Desertification held in Nairobi in 1977.

32. As a follow-up to this, negotiations were carried out in 1977 for a memorandum of agreement relating to the functioning of a joint environment office. This office was to be run by UNEP and ECA so as to "ensure on a permanent basis, a more efficient, integrated and rational machinery for the harmonious and effective co-operation between ... (the two organizations) ... in matters affecting the environment of Africa, and enable ECA, to act in certain cases, as the operational arm of UNEP in Africa for the effective implementation of environmental activities". The ECA Executive Committee at its seventeenth meeting in October 1977 sanctioned the February 1977 discussions held in Addis Ababa between UNEP and ECA officials which recognised that, "to carry these co-operative efforts a stage further", the two organizations had agreed on UNEP project No. FP/0302-77-02, aimed at strengthening the environmental capabilities of the United Nations regional commission (Africa) in an attempt to institutionalize these arrangements. Thus the existing Environment Unit at ECA would be strengthened to assist African countries to tackle their pressing environmental problems and also to work closely, not only with UNEP, but also with the Environment Co-ordination Board and other United Nations agencies in Africa and, implicitly, with the Organization of African Unity. ECA was now better placed than ever before not only to co-ordinate the environmental components of its divisional and inter-divisional activities but also to carry out inter-agency and inter-governmental activities that were within the mandate of the Commission.

33. The Executive Secretary's circular No. 5/78 of 5 November 1978 formally established the Environment Co-ordination Office within the Cabinet Office with the specific functions of:

(a) Collecting and maintaining necessary information on environmental aspects of social and economic activities on a global and regional level and advising the Executive Secretary, and his staff, on such matters;

(b) Developing and maintaining an assessment of the state of the environment; and preparing periodic reports related to environment issues in the region;

(c) Reviewing and co-ordinating within the Commission all programme and project activities from the planning stage to completion, to ensure that environmental considerations were fully taken into account and thus, strengthening the environmental dimensions of national, subregional and regional activities within its purview;

(d) Co-ordinating the Commission's activities with those of UNEP with regard to environmental aspects;

(e) Monitoring the implementation of the Commission's work programme in environmental matters; and

(f) Liaising with, and keeping UNEP headquarters as well as the UNEP Regional Bureau for Africa informed of the progress of the Commission's work in the field of environment.

34. African Governments' awareness of the need for environmental considerations in planning was enhanced also through collaborative activities with OAU, particularly at the level of the Conferences of Ministers and Assembly of the Heads of State of the OAU, specifically as from the meeting of the Conference in Rabat in 1979 when the environmental dimensions of development were given special consideration in the discussions on the Strategy for the African region in the International Strategy for the Third Development Decade. Resolution 332 (XIV) which the Plan of Action for this Third Development Decade was annexed, laid down that the main components to be included in an integrated environment-development strategy should be:

(a) Protection of the environment by monitoring pollutants in the air (smoke and noxious industrial gases); in the seas (oil); in the soil (excess fertilizers and heavy metal pesticides); and in food as contaminants;

(b) Conservation of natural resources to combat deforestation, soil loss and degradation, mineral depletion, desertification and salinization of arid farm lands;

(c) Environmental legislation to improve the quality of life by maintaining the basic needs of clean air and water, good food and health and a satisfactory work and leisure ratio; and

(d) Promotion of environmentally sound development through careful development planning for siting an economic activity, choice of process and technology, and anticipatory environmental problems, choice of end products, marketing strategy and periodic assessment of rural-urban population migration resulting from the promotion of the industrialization process.

35. From that time, ECA's co-ordination role, fortified by the support of OAU, took a decisive turn in awakening African Governments to the environment issue. More definite regional policy-oriented moves began to emerge at the end of the 1970s with the Monrovia Declaration (1979), by the Heads of State and Government

which, among other matters, denoted a determination "to ensure that our member States individually and collectively restructure their economic and social strategies and programmes so as to achieve rapid socio-economic change and to establish a solid domestic and intra-African base for a self-sustaining, self-reliant development and economic growth ... (and encourage) ... co-operation in the preservation, protection and improvement of the national environment ...",7/ due consideration being given to the fact that the" ... environment provides the human, physical and biological resources that form the basis for any development process ... (and that) ... environmental considerations have to be taken into account ... to reduce social and economic costs that arise from neglect and utter disregard ..." of the issues involved". 8/

36. It is in this spirit that the sixth meeting of the ECA Conference of Ministers adopted resolution 398 (XV) on the Plan of Action for the Implementation of the Monrovia Strategy for African Development for submission to the extraordinary meeting of the OAU Assembly of Heads of State and Government held in Lagos, Nigeria, in 1980.

37. Recognizing the need to take urgent action to provide the political support necessary for the success of the measures to achieve the goals of rapid self-reliance and self-sustaining development and economic growth, the summit made recommendations to the effect that:

(a) African Governments must identify priority areas of environmental concern within their countries for concerted effort to combat environmental problems;

(b) The Plan of Action at the national level should incorporate the development of policies, strategies, institutions and programmes for the protection of the environment;

(c) Regional co-operation in tackling environmental problems with trans-boundary effects is recommended and member States must also seek international support, advice and financial resources to implement action on environmental assessment and management". 9/

IV. EVALUATION OF ACHIEVEMENTS AND ACTIVITY IMPACT FROM THE STOCKHOLM CONFERENCE TO THE LAGOS PLAN OF ACTION

38. Within the framework of the activities contained in the foregoing paragraphs it will be useful to evaluate the impact of some specific activities. In environmental matters these activities involve:

(a) Co-ordination and programme management activities within the Commission;

7/ OAU Assembly of Heads of State and Government resolution AHG/ST.3(XVI)Rev.1, paragraph 1 and 4(h).

8/ Economic and Social Council, Official Records, 1979 Supplement No.13, Conference of Ministers resolution 332 (XIV), annex A section II, paragraph 6.

9/ A/S-11/14, annex I.

(b) Contribution to the performance of the secretariat as an executing agency;

(c) Inter-agency co-ordination and collaboration;

(d) Inter-governmental activities;

(e) Joint activities with non-governmental agencies.

(a) Co-ordination within the Commission

39. Apart from briefing the Executive Secretary and helping him to keep in touch with, and contribute to, the activities of the other agencies and bodies, there has been close inter-divisional co-ordination in environment programmes mainly with the following divisions:

(a) The Natural Resources Division, for which the Environment Co-ordination Office prepared a paper on the Environmental Aspects of the Development of Mining and Mineral Processing Industries in Africa for the Arusha Regional Conference on the Development and Utilization of Mineral Resources in Africa with which it also co-ordinated the distribution of tasks and responsibilities in the field of water and the environment as well as coastal and marine science activities;

(b) The Joint ECA/FAO Agriculture Division, through which contact is maintained with the FAO Environmental Law Unit in Rome, with the Joint ECA/FAO Division, the Environment Co-ordination Office is proposing a project for funding on remote sensing and food production in semi-arid zones;

(c) The Joint ECA/UNIDO Industry Division, from which a lot of assistance has been received in the monitoring of pollution in industry as well as the integration of environmental programmes in industrial planning;

(d) The Population Division, in matters of population and development;

(e) The Public Administration, Manpower and Management Division, in matters of environmental manpower and institutional capability development; and

(f) Diverse environmental inputs into the programmes of the other divisions and sections of the Commission.

40. Co-operation with, and collaboration from, these divisions have been very encouraging from the standpoint of ensuring adequate environmental inputs into their programmes, particularly in matters of project formulation and inter-governmental consultations.

(b) Contribution to the performance of the secretariat as an executing agency

41. Despite professional manpower problems, in terms of numbers, the Environment Co-ordination Office has spared no effort in coping with the Commission's added role as an executing agency, which was enhanced by the assistance offered by

UNEP under its project FP/0302-77-02 - Strengthening the environmental capabilities of the United Nations regional commissions (Africa).

42. Three projects have been executed by the Environment Co-ordination Office:

(a) FP/0302-75-13. Evaluation and assessment of and advice on national environmental machineries in selected African countries. This project, which ended in 1977, had the objectives of enhancing the awareness of African Governments about environment problems and encouraging them to set up environmental management institutions or re-inforce the capabilities of existing ones. This project highlighted the need for effective machineries, at this stage in African development, and the need for increased assistance from UNEP and ECA to member States within this context. By 1979 there was, at least, a government department or Ministry that handled environmental matters in most African countries. The project provided a sound operational base for the next project, the one on patterns of development and life-styles in Africa.

(b) FP/0404-78-03 (1976). Seminar on alternative patterns of development and life styles in Africa (phase I). This project was executed with the Policy and Programme Co-ordination Office and arose from the need for African Governments "to clarify the relationship between regionally agreed policy objectives and targets and the models of life-styles which tend to influence short-term policy-making, planning and plan implementation and the general direction and rate of socio-economic change"; and inter alia "the need to relate environment and development ...". The Seminar arrived at a number of conclusions, including one to the effect that "the task (the African Governments) face was how to harness their environmental resources to best serve their development process objectives, how to steer away from real and potential serious social and economic costs of not paying adequate and timely attention to environmental implications of their economic and other activities ... (and thereby)... without undercutting the environmental and resource base on which their development depends". For this reason it was important for African countries to co-operate "systematically and fully so as to realize the aims of self-reliant, self-sustaining and environmentally-sound development". 10/ The importance and impact of this Seminar were far-reaching because it formed the basis for consideration of environmental management at the Rabat Conference of Ministers and in the Monrovia Declaration and the Lagos Plan of Action.

(c) FP/2002-79-01(2000). Seminar for lawyers on development of environmental protection legislation in the ECA region (29 September - 3 October 1980). This Seminar arose from the need to establish environmental law machineries that would provide for the type of environmental legislation that could enhance the development of rules and regulations to be incorporated in the planning and control of development programmes in the region. A set of important recommendations covering all aspects of sectoral development were incorporated in the final report that was eventually submitted to the sixteenth session of the Commission and seventh meeting of the Conference of Ministers held in Freetown, Sierra Leone,

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10/ E/ECA/698/Add.1.

from 24 March to 11 April 1981. These recommendations constituted the context of resolution 412 (XIV). The participation in this project seminar of national legal experts, those from sister agencies, and the subsequent discussions at the Freetown meeting greatly enhanced the awareness of the need for legislative guiding principles for environmental management in African countries.

(c) Inter-agency co-ordination and collaboration

43. Inter-agency co-ordination and collaboration have been important areas of ECA activity in environmental matters. UNEP has remained the lead agency in this field particularly with project FP/0302-77-02, stepping up the capabilities of the Commission, and has encouraged other departments within the United Nations Secretariat to involve ECA in its environmental programmes: e.g. the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs entrusted the management of a workshop on marine management to ECA. However, other agencies have also made significant contributions to ECA's environment activities, particularly:

(a) There has been an increased element of joint programming with FAO in respect of regional projects touching on the environmental impact of agricultural activities, forest resource development and exploitation, as concerns the environmental impacts of deforestation, desertification activities and remote sensing;

(b) There has also been an increased level of consultation with UNESCO and joint programming in environmental matters, particularly marine science and technology and environmental education;

(c) The Commission's contribution to WHO's activities in environmental health has been greatly enhanced during the last three years specifically within the context of a Special Programme for Research and Training in Tropical Diseases (TDR), funded jointly by UNDP/WHO and the World Bank; a member of the Environment Co-ordination Office staff has been on the Scientific Working Group and the Steering Committee for Social and Economic Research in Tropical Diseases within the programme. Some of WHO/TDR projects in the region are being monitored by the member of staff;

(d) With UNSO, the Commission is enhancing collaborative action in desertification and related activities.

(d) Activities with member States and inter-governmental organizations

44. Reactions from the Governments of member States in favour of environmental considerations in development activities has been most encouraging. At policy meetings, participants have become increasingly conscious of the environmental dimensions of planning and have been reviewing their programmes within this context.

45. A great boost has been received from the Organization of African Unity and close contact has been maintained with the relevant division of OAU in environmental matters.

(e) Non-governmental organizations

46. Non-governmental organizations interested in environmental management in Africa have come to look to the ECA Environment Co-ordination Office for co-operation e.g. the International Union for the Conservation of Nature(IUCN), the joint USAID/Clark University (Massachussets)-funded Environmental Training and Management in Africa (ETMA) programme and many others have directly involved the Environment Co-ordination Office in their activities.

V. CONCLUSIONS

47. During the period under review, ECA has made considerable strides in the co-ordination of environmental management activities in the African region. Environmental considerations have become an integral part of the Commission's policy guide-lines such that these considerations and general environmental awareness have filtered into the programme conceptions of the member States of the region. Means and capabilities are yet inadequate but the grounds have been prepared for the environmental activities that could achieve, by the year 2000, those goals and aspirations that are embodied in the Lagos Plan of Action. A few points need, however, to be pondered very seriously and positive action taken as a safeguard so that external exploitation and machinations, both direct and indirect, are prevented from doing more harm than they already have done. 11/

48. It can be generally agreed that the basic motivation behind the Commission's environment activities, was the basic idea that it is pertinent to initiate and encourage the integration of environmental policies in development planning within the region, so that the potential disruption of the relationship between the component elements of the natural and human environments can be better controlled within the different sectors of development and at the different levels - national, subregional and regional. There is also the growing conviction that environmental activities must be given the needed political dimension, a sort of environment ideology for self-reliant and self-sustaining development through joint planning with OAU.

49. In this development effort, ECA has been constantly confronted by the different facets of the problem of development ideology - the colonial heritage and the new faces of this heritage that appear in economic relationships and the African development process - the division of the world into developed and the developing, the poor and the rich, North and South, all expressing the relationship where some still think that only the industrialized and develope North has pressing environmental problems because of the existence of the impact

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11/ A. L. Mabogunje, The development process, (Hutchinsons, London), 1980.

of industrial fall-out while the un-industrialized South can supposedly wait. Consequently, the pattern of developing the environmental management instrument when it comes to international bilateral co-operation still remains the same as over half a century ago.

50. With regard to investment, for instance, the continued reliance on foreign capital renders environmental management very difficult. The volume of investment for the exploitation of the natural resources of Africa is always enough to influence or determine local policy in favour of foreign investors leaving environmental conservation, which is a more expensive matter, to the vicissitudes of natural cycles in the African economic and political environment. This situation is sickening when one considers that in most cases, the

> "problems and their solutions are already well understood ... and further study is often superfluous ... (but) ... donor agencies have been filling file drawers with reports for years, the same results of which are rarely implemented. Donor agencies operating in the same country, often in the same subject area, tend not to communicate with each other ... (leading) ... to duplication of effort or failures to learn from the mistakes and success of others ... Donor organizations often exhibit little acceptance or understanding of the value systems, culture and tradition of recipient countries in their design and implementation of ... projects. Projects are started but left unfinished, or not subjected to proper follow-up, due to inadequate funding beyond present budgetary commitment ... (and) while donors may consider economic and ecological principles in the design of projects, these principles are often not taken seriously". 12/

51. Consequently, the efforts of ECA, UNEP, OAU and other collaborating agencies can be helpful to African Governments only if the latter actively support the objectives and principles of the legislative instruments provided by the Lagos Plan of Action and its supporting measures and provide a regional standard legislative modus operandi in matters of environmental monitoring and management practices. Integrated programme planning and management has become a sine qua non in African development strategies to break the resistance to the environmental management programme package. It is being realized that "the costs of containing pollution are easier to calculate than the benefits of unpolluted air and water". 13/ Few African countries, if any, have effective standards for environmental protection.

52. The lack of effective co-operation among African countries in resource exploration, exploitation and the formation of efficient development infrastructures and capabilities in all the sectors ultimately helps to maintain the stranglehold by external Powers on the African development process. In environmental management,

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12/ Forestry activities and deforestation problems in developing countries. USAID, PASA report No. AG/TAB. 1080-10-78, pp. 86-88.

13/ Willy Brandt (1980) North-South: A Programme for Survival (Pan Books, London).

"there is also a temptation for (African countries) to set lower standards than (other countries) in order to attract industry and create jobs ... (and that) ... there is an obvious need to harmonize standards, to prevent competitive debasement of them. ... (African) countries too are already experiencing industrial pollution and have an interest in establishing and enforcing standards for environmental protection. The same norms will not be appropriate for all countries and they must make their own judgements of the trade-off involved. But to seek to attract industry at the expense of environment might cause damage that is more costly to undo than to prevent ... .

"Environmental impact assessment should be undertaken wherever investments or other development activities may have adverse environmental consequences whether within the national territory concerned, for the environment of neighbouring countries ... . There should be guide-lines for such assessments, and when the impact falls on other countries there should be an obligation to consult with them". 14/

This is the task and the challenge that the African region has in these urgent environmental matters.

14/ Ibid. pp. 111 - 115.